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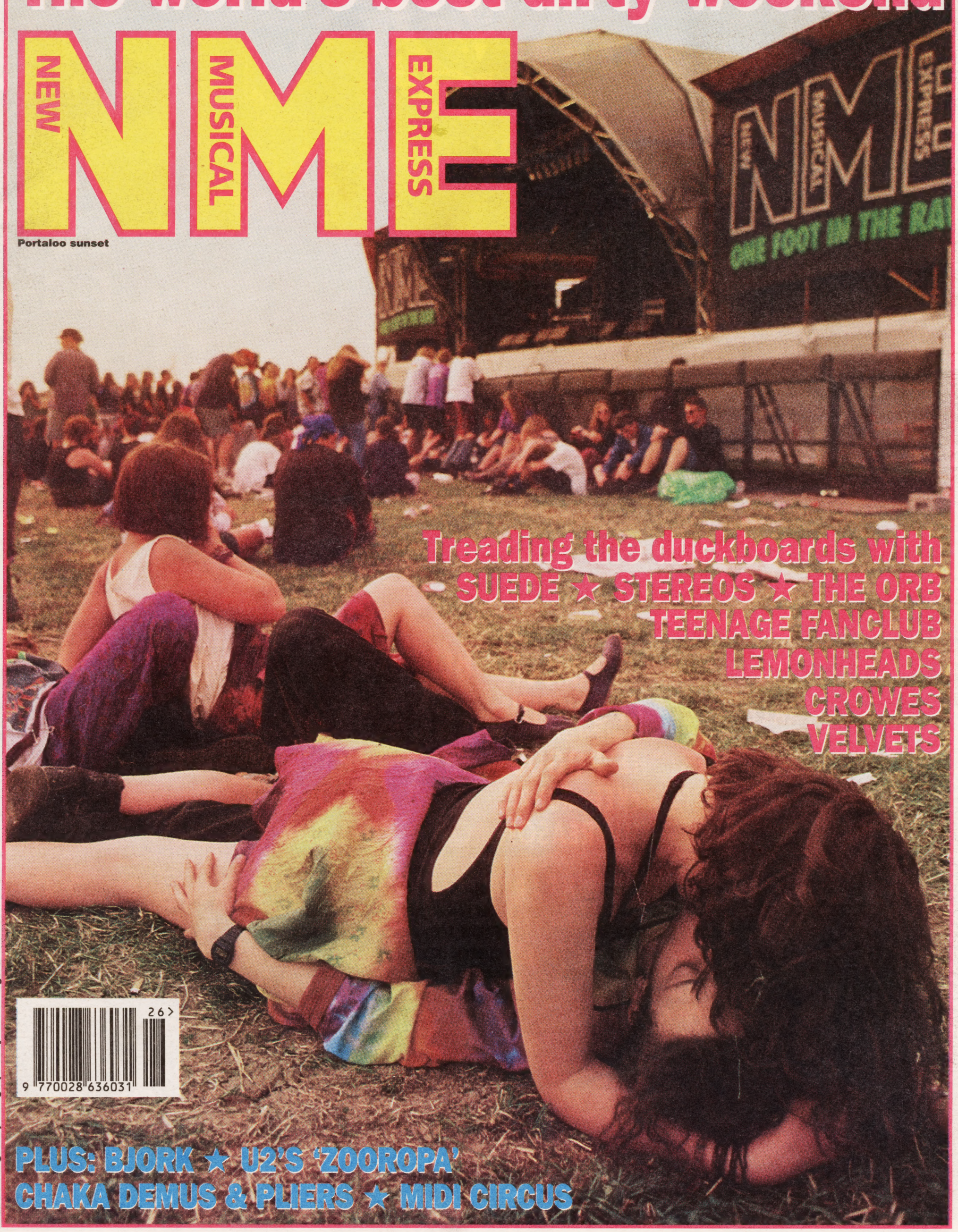
GLASTONBURY 1993

The world's best dirty weekend

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

NME

Portaloo sunset



Treading the duckboards with
SUEDE ★ STEREOS ★ THE ORB
TEENAGE FANCLUB
LEMONHEADS
CROWES
VELVETS

PLUS: BJORK ★ U2'S 'ZOOROPA'
CHAKA DEMUS & PLIERS ★ MIDI CIRCUS

Germany Dm 5.00 Spain Psa 250

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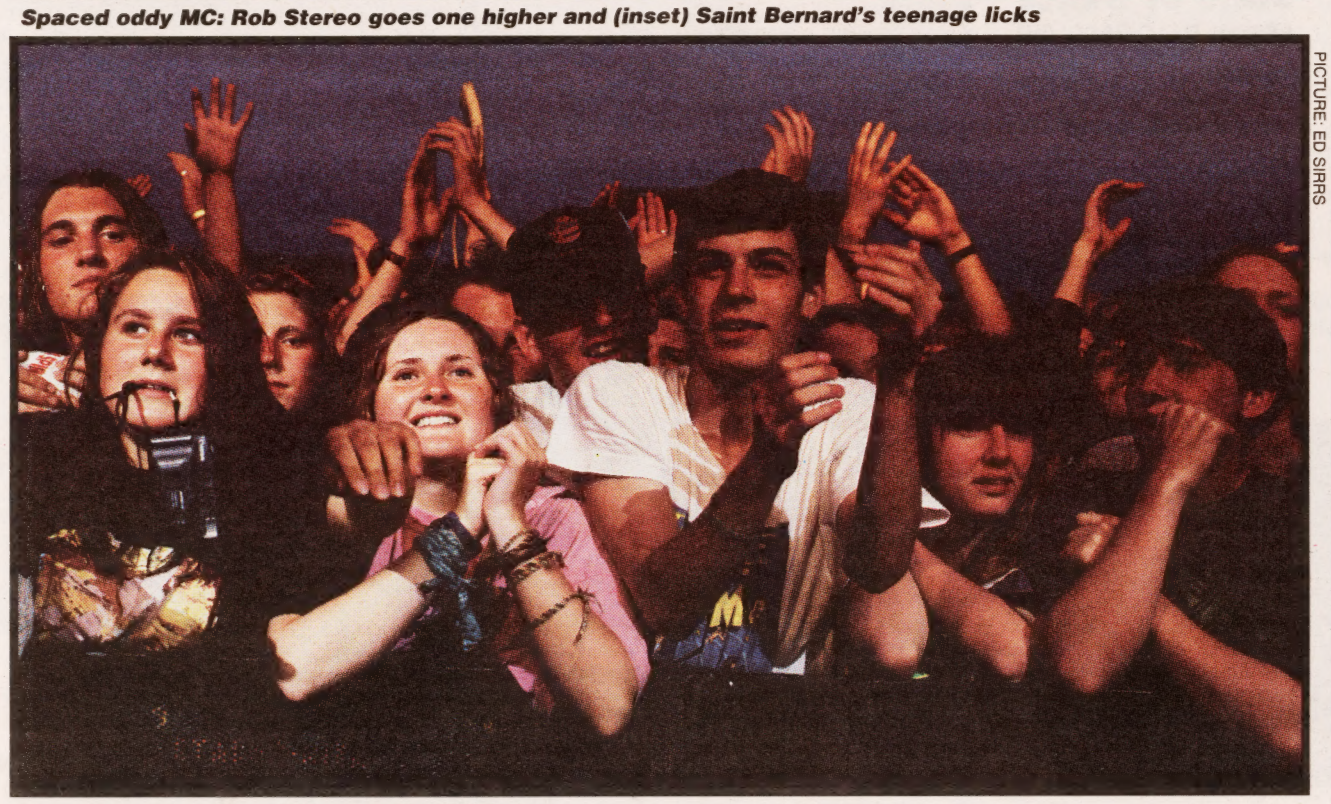
Ever-Glasting love photographed by Derek Ridgers

CLUB MAD: 18-DIRTY

PICTURE: DEREK RIDGERS (INSET PICTURE: ED SIRRS)

Spaced oddy MC: Rob Stereo goes one higher and (inset) Saint Bernard's teenage licks



PICTURE: ED SIRRS

Great barrier reefers: kids mob the NME stage

GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL 1993
PILTON FARM, SOMERSET

NME STAGE
FRIDAY

THERE'S A blond, dread-headed male bassist on stage and he's wearing a flowing polka-dot dress. Some guy who looks like a fresh-faced Robert Plant is gyrating his hips and flapping his denim flares in the breeze. A crushed velvet loon-panted longhair is hammering the stage with his guitar in a full-on Pete Townshend-style, neck-splintering frenzy. It's only just past noon but the Glasto Demolition Guitar Derby has already jump-started.

The sun is out and the vibes are turning pink in the heat. Half the crowd are half awake and the other half are busy rolling themselves into dreamland. Up in Tentworld, the shanty town of guy ropes and dope smoke that's descended on Michael Eavis' acres, they've been skin-up diving since 5:30 this morning.

The god of rock'n'roll timekeeping has been ejected from the site again and at midday in the feed-your-head meadow where the *NME* Stage looms, **WISHPLANTS** trash their instruments, and no-one gives a shit that the dark forces of rock theatre are at it before bacon butty breakfast has been digested.

A wild-eyed wanderer strolls through the field's tribe of boots'n'shades, beads'n'shorts youth waving a 'VIRTUAL REALITY THIS WAY' sign. What he doesn't seem to have noticed is that most of us left the planet behind when we filed through the gate.

The cement poetry of **LEATHERFACE**'s scouring powder poonk rock hardly seems ideal sunny festi-fodder. But two songs in, a sizeable mosh-pit has formed in front of the Sunderland stubble rockers. Frankie Stubbs' MacGowan-noded voice tears through the walls of sludge riffing, and for all their supposed grim attrition today, Leatherface are at least halfway invigorating.

Speed-head versions of 'I Can't Help Falling In Love' and Abba's 'Eagle' help the white bread grinder tunes to go down, and Stubbs shows off a kind of wino version of Chuck Berry's duck walk which is truly a thing of battered beauty.

Then **THE GOD MACHINE** descend, bringing their huge wodges of cranially-berating projectile noise vomit with them, and something approaching a blind date between Beelzebub and Bambi follows. So their correct setting is probably a torture chamber. So when their awe-core assault slows to a beatific psychedelic meander, they are briefly capable of binding a few spells. It doesn't excuse them from being about as appropriate as a Necromancer in Hobbitland today.

"Hello Donington!". Erm, it's **SUPERCHUNK**, bringing North Carolina dork wit to the stage. Still, no-one has to check the programme to see where they are because Superchunk's ram-riffing signposts itself clearly as Bubblegum Grunge, accelerating neatly through a set of caffeine psychosis Lemonhead-esque tunes, with only Mac's Pee Wee Herman vocals stopping them from breaking through the 'nearly on to something' barrier.

Maybe it's the fault of Wee Krazy Karso, the jolly Glaswegian who accosts me and threatens to kill my family if I don't give him a mention, but **THE AUTEURS** seem to struggle with the great outdoors. Luke Haines' is the palest man in Glastonbury today, and the only one wearing a suit, and his poised couplets and fussed-over chords wilt a little in the sunshine.

The cello-driven likes of 'Idiot Brother' and 'Junk Shop Clothes' might be lovely things to discover under a rock and dissect, but with Haines fighting for the right key, they are translucently mannered in the daylight. Even 'Showgirl' comes over shakey and insecure. A big shout goes out to Wee Krazy Karso, by the way.

Unfortunately for The Auteurs, **AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB** follow, coming on as the sun slips behind clouds to give a beautiful display of unforced poignancy. Addressing a small cluster of devotees, and repeatedly apologising for coming on while the Velvets are on the other stage, their steel guitar-flecked country soul touches a tender spot that only REM normally find. Bar-room hero Mark Eitzel's end-piece acoustic version of 'Chanel No 5' has at least one punky kid moved to tears. They're brilliant.

"So what's up with all you freakin' wankers?" Ah, it's the retiring stage presence of butt-kickin' blonde **BELLY** bassist Gail. Their arrival draws a mighty crowd into the field and with Gail giving it her startling aerobic axe-goddess all, Belly bound through the set like steroid-soaked antelopes, as does a good deal of the crowd.

Weird *Jungle Book* opener 'Trust In Me' aside, it's a swaggering affair, with a smiling

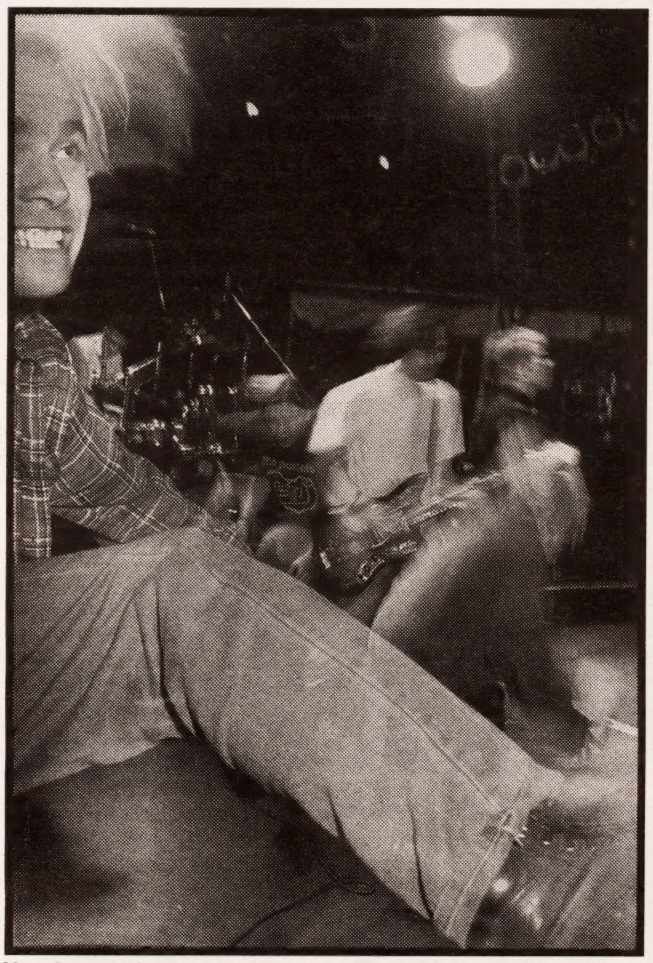
PICTURE: DEREK RIDGERS

Ozrics: For whom the bellbottoms Tull

● Good morning, hempers! Welcome to GLASTONBURY '93, to the highest, hottest holiday camp in the known universe – a party that, in the face of The Man's disapproving eye, still blossomed into the best freakin' experience of the year.

Wasn't that Evan Dando busking to fans in the grass? Were there really fairy lights up in the back fields, and hey, wasn't that air balloon that just floated past shaped just like a gigantic baseball boot? Tens of thousands of blissed-out campers said high-di-high to Stereo MC's, The Black Crowes, Senser, Jamiroquai and many, many more in the most astonishing splurge of music there's been for ages. Masses of people wigged out to the sound systems at Banana Joe's blanket stall and a dozen other groovy locations, some even legged it all way up to the mini Stonehenge to recharge their crystals – the point being that at Glastonbury, you could indulge your thing and do it *beautifully*.

So read on, then, for *NME*'s definitive stop-press report on the vibes, the raves and the rockers – a weekend sponsored by yours truly and committed to paper while the magic still hangs over those fields of dreams...



PICTURE: STEVE DOUBLE

He shoots, he scores! Belly's Chris kicks off for TFC

Tanya Donelly making up for a fluffed 'Feed The Tree' with her fine impersonation of Bjork fronting The Wonder Stuff. Frisbees are thrown. Gail discusses Tanya's bra size. This is probably the day's one Belly with no pot in it.

Steam rises off the crowd. People are falling over, jigging and stumbling and looking drunk. An eight-year-old girl in a *Wayne's World* T-shirt is clutching a football. It is the **TEENAGE FANCLUB** happy hour, and a matey, laddy, gloriously slack, boy rock thing it is, too. The months in the studio seem to have brought back their thirst for gigging, and haircuts aside, little has changed.

TFC still stagger their way to an easy win as communal knees-up champions of the day. Their version of The 1910 Fruitgum Company's 'Goody Goody Gum Drops' is splendidly dumb. And in an accidental anti-Suede gesture, they finish the set with a tape of the *Match Of The Day* theme, while Tanya Donelly and assorted popsters boot prole-friendly footballs into the throng and beer cans arc merrily through the air.

As darkness settles in, a few thousand hardcore **SUEDE**-heads press to the front. Further back, a field full of face-painter-friendly festi-goers fold their arms ready to scrutinize the darling boys of the pop moment. Once the screams that mark the entrance of Brett and his principal boys have subsided, it proves to be an odd and illuminating Suede show.

Bernard and Mat are on fine form, bitching seriously with their guitars and raising the tragi-drama of slashed lace pop operetta anthems like 'To The Birds' and 'Animal Nitrate' to near pornographic levels. They are the only band today who carry themselves with traditional popstar *hauteur*, and playing on their own territory, in the hormonai crush of some magnificently seedy urban venue, this would probably have been a Suede triumph.

But out here in the spliffing fields, Brett's sniffy theatrical bows, geisha girl dances and sun-shines-out-of-my-arse posturing, are viewed with considerable scepticism by a major part of the audience who mutter about 'nonces' and, erm, 'Julian Clary'. Suede hang like a chandelier above a hippy commune and it doesn't entirely work.

So when Brett and Bernard finish the set with the lovely but music hall-friendly new song 'Still Life', a grandly twinkling acoustic soul-mate of Bowie's 'The Bewlay Brothers', an uneasy hush follows. Half awed... and half bored. It all depends on what sort of camping you're into.

Roger Morton

SATURDAY

HASH! TRIPS! Black hash! Day two, and if it's grey clouds and a quarter past 11, then it must be time for **FAT DINOSAUR**. Despite employing a bouncing Alexei Sayle on vocals and choruses last seen doing time on Clash albums, they are very good indeed.

Time is then passed watching white **ADORABLE** balloons (cunningly provided, gratis, prior to their entrance) being sent heavenwards by their despairing owners as they search their pockets for something to make a roach out of. When they arrive, Piotr's distracted by having to play at midday, they get confused and demolish all their best songs (ie the singles) in grand fashion. It all ends with Piotr prostrate at the edge of the stage, growling out 'Sistine Chapel Ceiling'! Pure white easy action.

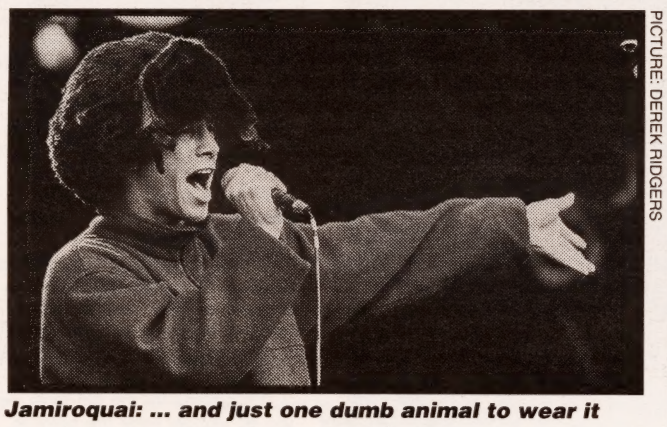
It's nobody's fault, but the arrival of **THE ROCKINGBIRDS** reminds us that for a couple of hours last year, people were actually suggesting we take country music SERIOUSLY. Then we woke up the next morning and forgot about it, except, of course, no-one remembered to tell The Rockingbirds. Nice harmonies though.

Before **DODGY** show up, a gaggle of Nivea-free youths offer themselves as their slaves by securing the virgin-turf front of stage for their own devilish purposes. At last, a fan base! Dodgy then continue their 'The Who To *Q* In 12 Months' career guide by smashing a brilliant hole in 'Lovebirds' and then poodling around in the needlework shininess of 'Big Brown Moon'. As ever, we jump around madly and groan audibly at equal turns.

It's **VERVE**'s Mad Richard who stops it raining. He's in a glittery grey jumper and electric blue cords today, and he can never frustrate us because we'll never know quite what he's capable of. Today, 'Gravity Grave' hangs in the air like a star-coated tower block, and when he screams "One more minute!" in desperation at their time being up, it's a key moment and a 24-carat admission of a belief in the IMPOSSIBLE. Stunning.

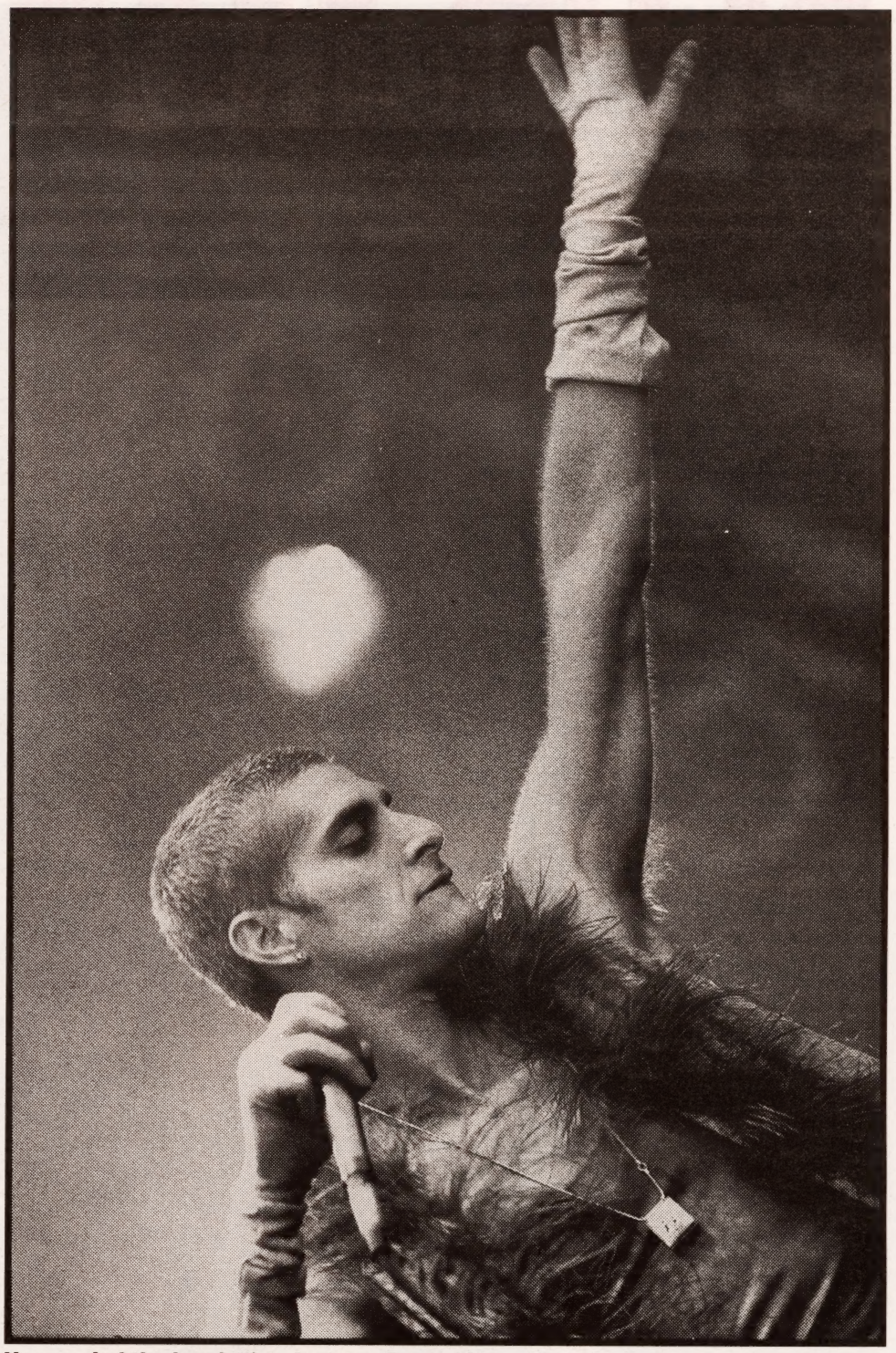
You guess. **JAMIROQUAI**: saviour of soul music or scrawny, acne club-child in a smelly raccoon hat? Hmm. If only 'When You Gonna Learn' (a classic to rank with former soul hope Omar's 'There's Nothing Like This') wasn't turned into a messy 15 minute jam, this (essentially brave) crossover gig could have been more than a curio where the prospect of a spicy baked potato ends up the more compelling option.

Rubbish live, the **DIGABLE PLANETS** are not. A curdled whisk-up of the Last Poets' edginess and the drifting flow of Charlie Mingus, Butterfly, Ladybug and Doodlebug manage to mix the crowd up out of its indie-jazz hierarchies for the first time and charm them into frugging along to



PICTURE: DEREK RIDGERS

Jamiroquai: ... and just one dumb animal to wear it



PICTURE: STEVE DOUBLE

Never mind the boa-looks: Just say Porno kids

PICTURE: STEVE DOUBLE

Dippy Dando joins the Gram-raiders

'Rebirth Of Slick'. Even satsuma-faced crusties, having mistimed their appearance for the Ozrics, stumble along in its tide.

It's not long though before we enter the Jurassic Age, where Pentangle and Jethro Tull's less interesting spells are considered to be awesome musical moments. Cider is consumed, bodies are fallen over, and flute solos last for centuries. In an interminable set, **OZRIC TENTACLES** achieve nothing but the reinstatement of the sort of proggy indulgences even pre-madness Terry Bickers would pale at. Great Brian May hair, though.

By now, the evening's swimming overhead and **STEREO MC's** Rappin' Rob is a soul'n'brimstone preacher initiating us in the ways of the funk. We humour him by waving our hands in the air in the belief that before long he'll take us on further journeys through 'Connected'. Rob's smart, though: "I know what you want!" howls the Van Gogh of chart credibility before groaning away some more.

We dance ourselves dizzy and loiter until **THE ORB** send us reeling into the night with the perfect mellow ambient soundtrack, a brain-frazzling light show and constant messages to "Watch the skies". When the sound of a motorbike engine roars through the PA, an acid disciple to my left gasps "Look at the ceiling, man!", and we crane our necks in search of a one-man star buggy, but there's none to be found, and we head off into the night, both still looking upward.

An epic day, and one during which, for once, pop dared to look to the sky and FLY. Amazing.

Paul Moody

SUNDAY

SO PAGE'n'Percy never did get it together on Friday, but there's a bit of a Zep feel to Sunday's festivities due to the booking policy of pitting the grunge and crusty constituencies against each other – a crunge scenario, no less. What does the average Senser fan reckon to Sebadoh? Will Come have obtained suntans and a guest rapper for the day? Are Mega City Four here to make peace between the two camps?

For all the frenzied generic cross-pollination of recent years, most people still prefer to cherish their sacred cows and damn their assumed foes with equal vigour – hence the varyingly massive end-of-set migrations, where one group of hardcore devotees is replaced by another. The elusive crossover does happen now and again – this year, most obviously, with Stereo MC's – but their infrequency only serves to reinforce the prime fact of festival life: that often the music is the least on anyone's agenda.

Certainly for those drawing the breakfast time *reveille* slot, any crowd is going to be welcome, and **THE SEA** don't give the impression that they're too fussy about dress codes and the like. As their unrepentently cheery ska-folk-rap pic'n'mix manoeuvres play out over the slowly awakening hordes, a thought looms: is there a booming market in late '70s synthesisers or does today's technology provide this crustastically crap trademark keyboard sound?

ULTRAMARINE's brand of bucolic ambience-with-grooves is the pre-luncheon floor-filler, and no wonder. With the heat rising steadily, this, well, bunch of quiet-spoken blokes with short hair are egged on in their quest for that laid-back and cosy spiritual haystack by a couple of refugees from the Caravan era on flute and accordion. There's no place for their stunning new collaboration with Robert Wyatt, but still Ultramarine prove that even the most unprepossessing individuals have their own brand of small-scale charisma to offer.

A lack of charisma is probably not something **SENSER** lose much sleep over. But for much of the set, an iffy sound conspires to muddle Heltham and Kerstin's progressively hysterical efforts to slay the stodgy vibes that are very much in the area of their bass speaker. Come the closing 'Eject', though, and suddenly everything is clear. For those few minutes alone, Senser have the crowd at their mercy, enough to shake off the lingering hangover and prompt thoughts towards working on the next day's.

Just as Senser vibed the audience up, then **DR PHIBES & THE HOUSE OF WAX EQUATIONS** would take 'em, well, not down exactly, but certainly stood on their heads and along to the side a bit. One thing undoubtedly up was the Phibes balloon that since its arrival had become a fondly regarded festival landmark, its arrow pointing down to wherever these wah-wah-wackos were hanging out at the time.

BACK TO THE PLANET continue the day's archetypally Glasto theme of being a band often assumed to be best appreciated while waccy-baccied out of yer dungarees. Maybe the fact that a sizeable percentage of the populace were subscribing to this belief with admirable gusto did them a shock disservice, as this was a far more muted response than the Planeteers are getting used to.

No slacking on their part, though, as Fil plucks at will from her extensive catalogue of knees-up-Muvva-Braaahn exhortations. "Go on, take your shirts off," she pipes, one eye cannily on the weather. "Get braaahn!" Too late, luv, we'd all decided to get pink instead. And swoon to their charming, utterly irresistible 'Daydream'.

CONTINUED OVER

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Lou Barlow is, as ever, being brutally frank. "Come and see us at a real show. This is cool, but we suck." Yowsa! It's that merry mid-afternoon comedown, courtesy of the mis-billed cheery American contingent. **SEBADOH** give a decent enough account of themselves in the end, but this performance probably deserves to be remembered only for Eric Gaffney's announcement that he had 50 special edition T-shirts and that he was going to come down to the *NME* tent and sell them. Slacker? Huh! Now there's a man looking beyond rock and its transient career opportunities.

COME play fair and at least give ominous warning to the unwary with Thalia Zedek and Chris Brokaw's two-minute tortured guitar intro. It's a compelling performance as usual; too much so for one punter who, doubtless enticed by the name, decided to remove all his clothes and observe proceedings from the front. Two songs later he retreated, demonstrably unmoved.

After this brave but ill-conceived dally into the white padded cell, normal service is resumed somewhat by **MEGA CITY FOUR**. In chipper form and with Wiz recklessly sporting some rather short, err, shorts, this was a much healthier MC4 than spotted on last year's summer fest drag.

'Iron Sky' shone like the heavens above, while 'Words That Say' remains a diamond of melancholic pop craftsmanship against which all Mega quibbles must be measured.

Meanwhile, backstage, a certain amount of panic has been caused by the non-appearance of the **LEMONHEADS**. Apparently, Evan Dando decided to go off on a parallel Glasto experience of his own back home and the band missed their scheduled flight. Fortunately, a mere 30 minutes prior to stage time, Dando makes his genius entrance – head hanging out of a battered old Ford Fiesta, eyes boggling at the cooooool vibes. Well, these fellas don't have much truck with pre-gig meditation routines, and are all well capable of making up for lost time on the (cough) distractions front, so where's the problem?

There are none. "I'd like to apologise to the stewardess from United Airlines," says His Cooooolness, a little too cryptically for the majority of folks present, but then he is on especially lateral form today. "Kill George Bush!" he yells topically during 'Alison's Starting To Happen', then proceeds to lead the 'Heads through a commendably thorough taster of the new album – 'The Great Big No' ("about United Airlines"), 'Big Gay Heart', 'Down About It', 'Rest Assured', 'Style' and the already legendary 'It's About Time' – all oczing the same heartachability that prompted these scenes of hysteria in the first place.

For a finale, Nic Dalton cartwheels at least ten feet over the lip of the stage down into the photo-pit and then again into the crowd. And he wonders why he's got a bad back. Later, backstage, Evan treats a gaggle of goggle-eyed girls to a solo campfire session, pausing to wave to a passing police car "Hello, cops!" Two years ago this man couldn't get arrested; now everyone's after a piece of Evan Dando. Cooooool.

So inauspicious is **PORNO FOR PYROS**' performance that one almost forgot it was their UK live debut. Faced with a crowd by now frazzled in every conceivable sense, Perry Farrell goes for super-ham overload: a troupe of clown dancers, a lesbian strip routine on a table raised at the back of the stage, fire breathers, waggling his silver clad butt, and talking a lot of bollocks: "Ever held a gun? Pretty scary feelin'..."; "Watcha got? I just got my cock and a microphone..."

The degree to which Farrell is taking the piss here is hard to discern, mainly because the Pornos' aural battery is so unremarkable it leaves the spotlight burning firmly on their resolutely bonkers frontman. And hence matters descend into tepid jazz-fusion burlesque.

Fortunately **SPIRITUALIZED** were on hand to smooth over the wounds and bring the hottest Glastonbury in years to a tolerably warm close. And we all know that warm plus hot equals... cooooool.

Keith Cameron

PICTURE: STEVE DOUBLE

Kravitz: girls he's just a Lenster for your luuuuurve...

PICTURE: STEVE DOUBLE

The Black Crowes: weed will, weed will rock you!

PYRAMID STAGE
FRIDAY

BLAZING SUNBURN, sticky noodles, ravers in bloomers, rolls of pink flesh and DRUGS AVAILABLE ON EVERY CORNER! Congratulations! You have entered a subtle shade of paradise.

High above the Pyramid Stage, the hash-cake sellers can't believe their eyes. There, in front of them, a three-legged **ROLF HARRIS** is grinning wildly and stomping across the stage in a pair of lurid tangerine trousers. Later, having discarded his extra leg (diddle-iddle!), he bamboozles us all with an Aboriginal interpretation of 'Honky Tonk Women', and then leaves us with a bizarre rendition of 'Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport' sung rousingly to the tune of 'Rule Britannia'. We clap frantically for an encore, mainly because the only clouds in the sky are on Rolf's jacket, but partly because **TRAGICALLY HIP** are due on next, and it's the only diversionary tactic we've got.

As it turns out, there's much more to fear in the shape of **GREEN ON RED**, whose saloon bar twang tootles along harmfully with scant regard for the last 25 years of, erm, rock progression. Off with their stetsons!

The cream of the unfashionable elite, however, are here to wave Australian flags at **MIDNIGHT OIL**. Before long, we are losing what little control the sun has left us, and throwing our lobster arms into the sky in tribute. This is because, against all the evidence of the scriptures, Midnight Oil are fab. When boiled egg-head singer Peter Garrett (a picture in Hare Krishna orange) thunders across the stage breaking drum sticks, we even forgive him his between-song Bob Geldof prattling and vow never to laugh at Aussie rock again. Until next week, that is.

All aboard the ghost train! We squeeze 'Sweet Jane', 'Venus In Furs' and finally 'I'm Waiting For The Man' out of **THE VELVET UNDERGROUND** whilst they admire our sunburn and we try to figure out any reason they might be doing it for aside from money. It's a Marie Celeste of a set-list, and as they survey the biggest open air bedroom in Europe with dull dollar bills in their eyes, it all becomes too obscene to be believed. Next!

ROBERT PLANT is a scream. One that lasts a long 45 minutes, in fact. It's the sound of a man who's discovered he has the face of a creased leather jacket and straggly lemon rope for hair, and we love him dearly for it. Crap version of 'Whole Lotta Love', though.

Chris Robinson, singing wizard with **THE BLACK CROWES**, loves it, however, and dedicates a sprawling spaghetti of an instrumental to Plant's, erm, memory.

We get a new everlasting number, 'Title Song', the coolest slices of the last album ('Thorn In My Pride', 'Sting Me') and a journey through 'Morning Song' that shuffles across our souls and puts the fragments back in a dope-flavoured box. It's a fantastic performance, and as we file back through the dust-paths, it sinks in that we've been caught in the spell of genius. No, really.

Paul Moody

PICTURE: ED SIRRS

Rolf: with two extra heads, diddle-iddle-iddle-dum...

SATURDAY

FOUR IN the afternoon, the field's half-full; **HOTHOUSE FLOWERS** are 20 seconds into their first song, and already they're reaching paroxysms of gospel-tinged emotion it takes Southern devotional choirs a lifetime's faith to attain. That's not to say they're faking it, of course. Oh no. Let's just call it premature ejaculation.

For all their histrionics, though, the Flowers are ideally suited to a warm Saturday afternoon at Glasters. People just lie back and let the blandly agreeable vibes wash over them, while the 'peace and love' message kinda hovers in the air and, like, mellows.

Mass desertion takes place for **CHRISTY MOORE**, the fans lured by the triple temptations of Digable Planets, inedible burgers and unaffordable beers. It's a shame, 'cos Christy is a hero. A portly, balding chap, highly revered among lovers of Irish music, he is well aware that news of his God-like status has yet to reach the **LENNY KRAVITZ** Fan Club; one little ditty containing the lines, "*Who the hell is Christy Moore?/Christ, I've never heard of him before!*" His stock-in-trade, though, is folky ballads, and he ends with a naked, ominous 'Ride On' which is simply stunning.

The Lenster, of course, is a charlatan; a second-rate imposter feeding off the myth of Hendrix. Which makes it rather surprising that thousands of people are squeezed into this field, spontaneously linking arms in a final singalong of 'Let Love Rule', teenage girls worshipping at the altar of his buckskin flares.

Sure, he knows how to write a classic pop song, but he also knows how to kill its momentum with a five-minute axe solo. Deadly boring. But to see two 16-year-old girls playing air guitar with cigarettes for plectrums, is to witness the power of lust. Why do they love Lenny so much? "He's sex!" they chorus. Yeah, they prefer Hendrix, but as they say, "He's dead, isn't he?" Let pragmatism rule.

THE KINKS, meanwhile, are definitely not sex. They're nostalgia, of a kind. Even though it's dark, you can tell from the baldness of the men's heads, silhouetted against the stage lights, that their fans are no spring chickens.

Sour old Ray Davies as Mr Entertainment is an odd concept. Yet that's what he's become, even if you still think he's taking the piss half the time. Obviously determined not to be upstaged, but lacking The Lenster's nonchalant charisma, Ray gives a lot tonight; conducting mass singalongs from the very first song, performing scissor-kicks, and changing his jacket every ten minutes.

It's nirvana for the old fans, but you do wonder what the point is, until, finally casting aside his entertainer's mask after a punky version of 'David Watts', Ray beams at us and says, "God, this is fun, isn't it?" It is, and it's nice to know that's why he's up there.

SUNDAY

MIDDAY ON Sunday, and you could fry an egg on the ground. It's sweltering, and most people are still sleeping off hangovers when **GRANT LEE BUFFALO** play, soundtracking the headaches and regrets with their exquisitely tortured country-booze-rock, like Mike Scott fronting Crazy Horse.

Nanci Griffith having cried off with a sore throat, **BILLY BRAGG** takes up the slack, beginning with 'To Have And Have Not'; stingingly appropriate in light of the clampdown on the travellers. "*Just because I dress like this doesn't mean I'm a public menace.*" Quite.

That's Bragg at his best. Unfortunately, the inter-song banter soon takes over, and the dreary spectre of Red Wedge comes to haunt us. With his witty one-liners, laboured puns and lefty polemic, Bragg is still stranded mid-way between the genuine emotional resonance of a young Costello, and the cartoon sloganeering of Carter. He seems to have slipped into complacent cult-dom without really developing as he once promised to.

VAN MORRISON, on the other hand, after threatening to implode with blandness in the '80s, is now undergoing a renaissance. Admittedly he no longer plays anything as harrowing as 'TB Sheets' or as fevered as 'Beside You', but Van has fought his battles and come through; he's earned the right to the kind of contentment and even exultation which other acts try to fake.

If at times the music degenerates into glorified cocktail jazz, it's always saved by his trembling, gravelly voice, and, for the most part, the new material is grittier and bluesier than ten years ago. He's no showman, but he doesn't have to be; the crowd sing 'Brown-Eyed Girl' spontaneously, and the closing 'Gloria' has the oldies shaking off their post-Kinks fuzziness and adding aching limbs to the sunburn.

By the time **BAABA MAAL** appears, the field is practically empty. Tents disappear rapidly from the hills as the air begins to cool, and the hordes miss one of the weekend's treats. Resplendent in a technicolour dreamcoat with his eight band members in golden robes, Baaba's voice is a wonderfully melodic howl; the music ranging from the haunting to the joyful, the emotions clearly expressed in spite of the French lyrics. And this being Glasters, he even gets the crowd to sing along in French.

Joie de vivre!

Sam Taylor

ORGANIC FREAK CREATURES

A STUMBLE AROUND THE OUTER LIMITS

IN THE heart of the historic Vale Of Avalon, perhaps even on the very site where the psychedelic milk bar shoots lasers late into the night, King Arthur once held court, and knights regularly slayed dragons before tea. Ley-lines buzz with the Earth's natural mysticism (or is it the power cables overhead?) and one feels an immediate spiritual bond with nature (especially when you pitch your tent on a medium-rare cow pat), for this is Glastonbury and there's nothing else in the world like it.

For three days of the year, beautifully bronzed, cosmically-tuned hippies run naked in the sun, free love reigns and a kangaroo burger costs three quid. The dragons are still here, albeit adorning acid tabs (or litmus paper fakes – you pays your money and takes your life in your hands) and the New Age knights have all rode in from Brixton and Moss Side, whispering the heraldic call of the festival – "black'ashaceedsensee" – like a Buddhist chant.

Such 'loveable' rogues are an integral part of the modern festival atmosphere. Like the 'vibe' of being woken and whacked over the head with a baseball bat in order to participate in the ancient rite of being relieved of your Kodak fun camera and 12-pack of 'kitten-soft' toilet rolls, which for the unfortunate victims, can be painfully tangible and too literal an interpretation of the 'free festival' ethos.

This, though, is the nasty rip-tide pulling against the more genial flow of the festival. The overriding atmosphere is undeniably mellow, relaxed and friendlier than ever (in contrast to last year, which was best characterised by the late night loon-pant ravers and nose-bleed sound systems). The blazing sunshine helps, but even on Saturday when rain clouds continually threaten to piss on our collective chips, they can't darken the stoned ambience of a euphorically spaced-out crowd.

Lest things become in danger of resembling a *Stepford Wives* weekend convention, the fringe of loonies is still as vibrant and willing to entertain as ever. On any given wander around the fields you will be accosted (willingly or otherwise) by hat-stands and heretics in various stages of mental disrepair or chemical over-indulgence. The trick is to work out who is a paid performance artist and who is simply having grey bicycles on toast for tea.

Take your pick from the following: a naked man painted pale green having an extended eco-political debate with a plastic bag. Two Gestapo officers ostensibly reading copies of *The European* while puppets peak over the top of their papers, sip scotch and blow smoke rings at passers-by. Three men pushing a pram, clad only in DM's and tutus. Bin bags coming to life and hopping through the markets. Witches, wood nymphs, tree spirits and sprites. The wedding ceremony during the Hothouse Flowers' set between two bald gentlemen wearing nothing but birthday suits and five penis studs apiece. Oh, and, of course, some jugglers!

All of which is taking place outside of the mutually assured mania of the Circus Field, where innocent, kiddy-friendly clowning (Stompy is setting fire to his trousers again) by day, becomes a psychedelic psychosis theatre by night.

Fire engines race through the crowd adorned with techno dancing mermaids, chasing motorbikes dressed up as Robin Reliants and carrying suitcases which grow legs and run off (and that's after only one cup of 'medicinal' guarana tea, honest). Meanwhile, a bizarre French circus drama appears from nowhere each night at 2am, pure plotless insanity involving a trapeze swinging leopard, Siamese twin accordian players, a bald man in a tutu in a cage (*what is it about bald men and tutus? – Ed*), more fire engines, and a French punk band. Cheers. And jugglers juggling flaming torches, of course!

A more common or garden(ing) species of eccentric is to be found In the Green Field. These peace-loving creatures are positively evangelical in their attempts to convert the unenlightened to their quaint eco-Luddite view of the world and convince the kids of the drudgery of Sega Megadrives, wearing clothes, using electricity, not living in tree-houses and eating food that tastes nice. Try using a wind-powered phone to call an ambulance for your pregnant wife at 4am on a calm night and you may not be so swayed by their arguments, but remember – it might just save the planet some day. And at least they don't juggle.

Back down towards the main stages, the markets are a writhing mess of frenzied mass consumption that have turned these normally sleepy Somerset fields into a barter town more comparable to downtown Bombay after the water supply has been spiked with speed.

Everything from Tibetan armpit rings to incense-flavoured condoms is here to tempt the happily deranged, easily deluded festival shoppers. Oh yeah, and let's not forget the juggling stalls!

For all the alternative cultures, lifestyles, happenings, loonies and endless 'percussion workshops', the grubby fingerprints of The Man are more visible than ever on this year's festival. No travellers to represent the real alternative lifestylers, no sound systems and very few late-night raves (although many still valiantly attempt to recreate those Aphex Twin folk classics on acoustic guitars round the camp fire).

Nevertheless it's obvious from the looks of dazed wonder on the faces of Glastonbury first-timers that this is still an awe-inspiring, mind-expanding, multi-faceted 5,000 acres of fun that makes Disneyland look like your local launderette.

But remember, kids – don't try this at home.

Funny Cigarettes & Spam
'Bowels Of' Steele

PICTURE: STEVE DOUBLE

And they called it puppy love...

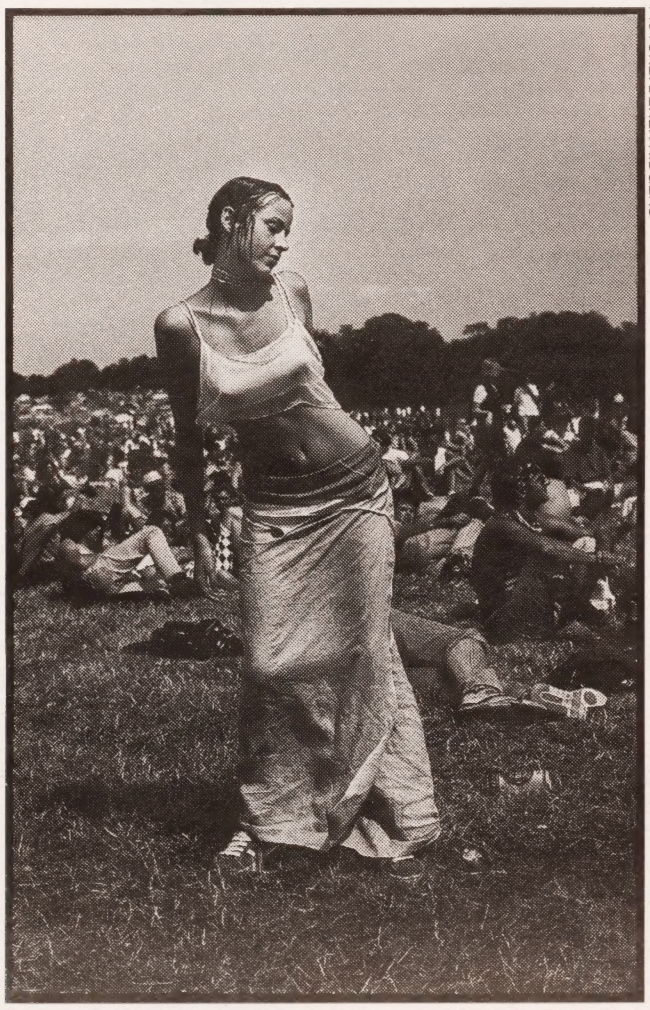
UPPERS

1 The sun!
2 Joe's Blanket Stall – doubled up, during the hours of darkness, as the best undercover rave show of the festival.
3 The late-night 20 foot robot and laser show in the circus field.
4 The impromptu solo set by Evan Dando for a select goggle-eared few backstage.
5 Covered portaloos!
6 Fun-Da-Mental, Trans-Global Underground and The Co-Creators on the Jazz Stage.
7 Teenage Fanclub kicking 200 footballs off the stage.
8 Ride's Mark Gardener – arrived on Friday, lost his lift, lost the plot and stayed.
9 Dongas Tribe pizzas – a quid a throw in the green field.
10 Rolf Harris – Glasters' answer to Bjorn Again at Reading.

DOWNERS

1 Tent thieves.
2 The site map, which bore a severely tenuous relation to reality.
3 Lou Reed constantly checking his watch during The Velvets' performance and smoking a big, self-satisfied dog turd of a cigar backstage afterwards.
4 Lenny Kravitz throwing a wobbler when he realised The Kinks were headlining over him.
5 Peter Garrett of Midnight Oil slagging the nasty horrid music press from the stage because they don't say nice things about him. (*They don't say ANYTHING about him! – Ed*)
6 No raves going on for more than an hour into the night.
7 The thousand yard reek of the bogs.
8 Galliano flying onto the site by helicopter. Arf!
9 Donuts mysteriously becoming more expensive on Saturday.
10 Going home.

● Those unable to buy a spiffing red *NME* Glasters T-shirt 'cos they sold out on site can get one by sending a cheque made out to IPC Magazines to: *NME* T-SHIRTS, 26th Floor, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS.

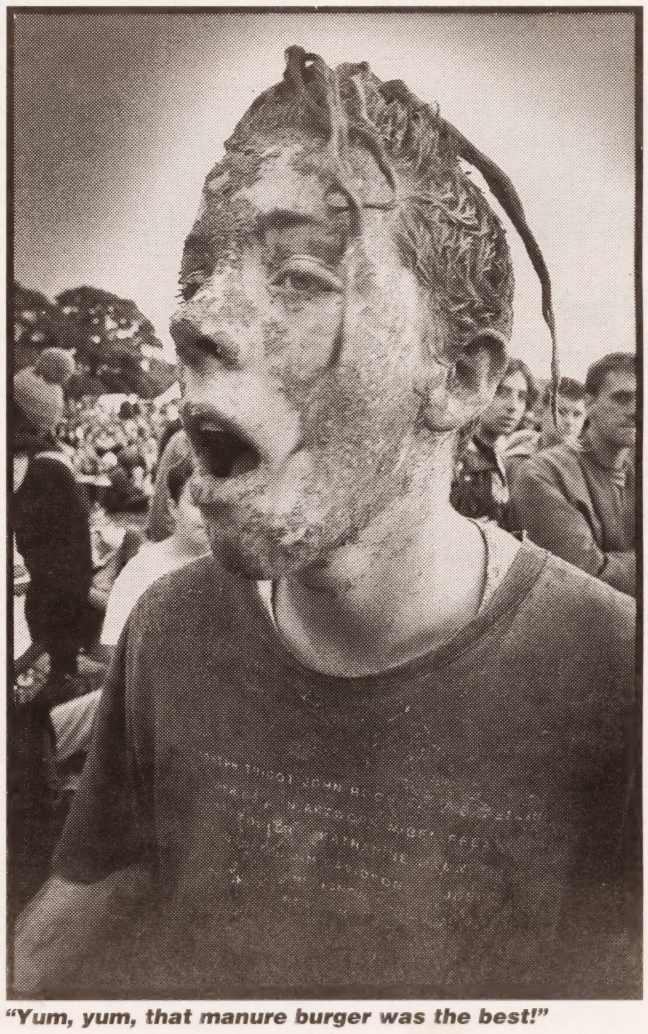


PICTURE: DEREK RIDGERS

Venus de Meadow: with an extra arm! (diddle-iddle!)

MAGNIFICENTLY FALSE GLASTO RUMOURS

1 That David Bowie, spotted breakfasting with that Iman in a Glastonbury hotel, was going to play with Suede.
2 That Led Zeppelin were about to reform for the weekend.
3 That The KLF were going to play with The Orb.
4 That a convoy of 700 travellers was about to break into the site.
5 That the toilets were far better this year.
6 That the Lemonheads weren't gonna make it because Evan Dando had been thrown off a plane in New York classed as "too trashed" to fly.
7 That Shirley Bassey was going to be the special guest on the Pyramid Stage.
8 That Suede were going to split because 'Lord' Brett was travelling separately from the others.
9 That there was a confrontation between revellers and police involving stone-throwing after a raid on the 'drug bridge'
10 That this was the last Glasto ever.



PICTURE: STEVE DOUBLE

"Yum, yum, that manure burger was the best!"